



The Asia Foundation

Afghanistan in 2009: A Survey of the Afghan People Frequently Asked Questions October 27, 2009

Q1. Who funded the poll?

The poll is a product of The Asia Foundation, funded by the U.S. Agency for International Development.

Q2. Who did The Asia Foundation partner with to carry out the survey?

The Afghan Center for Socio-economic and Opinion Research (ACSOR), Kabul. A total of 648 Afghan men and women were trained to conduct in-person interviews throughout Afghanistan – in all 34 provinces. Many of the interviewers were part of the Afghan field teams for the 2006, 2007, and 2008 surveys.

Q3. How were the questions developed?

The 2009 and previous surveys use a standard questionnaire for comparability over time, which combines questions on Afghanistan that are relevant to policy makers, social researchers, and donor organizations with questions that are tried and tested and have been used in other countries across the world in well-known surveys like the *East and South Asia Barometers* and the *Latin Pop Surveys*, as well as other Asia Foundation surveys in Bangladesh, Cambodia, Indonesia, the Philippines, and Nepal. As in previous years, this poll was designed, directed, and edited by the Foundation, using a process of consultation to arrive at the best possible questionnaire, given the need for valid and reliable data that could be compared over time, a tenet essential to useful survey techniques. See Q7 below for more information on the consultative process.

Q4. What methodology was used?

The methodology used was a multi-stage random sample of 6,406 in-person interviews with Afghan citizens 18 years of age and older, both women and men, all residing in Afghanistan.

The sampling universe was divided into eight geographical regions consisting of 34 provinces. All of the provinces were covered in the survey. Due to the local cultural traditions, the universe at the outset was divided into male and female sub-samples. Each region, province, and further strata was allocated an equal number of male and female sampling points. The interviews among the male and female respondents were conducted by Afghan enumerators of the same sex, for example, only women enumerators interviewed women respondents.

(A full explanation of the methodology is provided in Appendix 2 of this report.)

Q5. How many Afghans were surveyed?

6,406 (53% men and 47% women)

Q6. How did security issues in the country affect the results of the survey?

During 2009, the security situation in some provinces, such as the presence of active fighting, as well as natural impediments such as flooding in some provinces caused a number of sampling points to be tactically adjusted or replaced to keep interviewers out of harm's way. Alternate



The Asia Foundation

sampling points were selected and allocated in the same provinces to adjust for insecurity and logistical difficulties in order to cover all 34 provinces and obtain a representative sample of views. Full details on the methodology of the survey are available in Appendix 2 of this report.

Q7. How is this different from The Asia Foundation's 2004, 2006, 2007, and 2008 polls?

The 2004 survey was geared towards assessing voter awareness of the 2004 Afghan Presidential elections, had a smaller sample size (804 respondents), and the number of questions were aimed at those who intended to vote in the 2005 Afghan elections.

The 2006 survey included many similar questions on political processes but was much broader in its sweep than the 2004 survey, polling 6,226 Afghans in 32 provinces with questions about trust, problem solving, security, women's rights, religion, and development.

The 2007 poll worked with a larger sample size of 6,263 and covered all 34 provinces.

The 2008 survey interviewed 6,593 Afghans from each of the 34 provinces of Afghanistan.

For 2009, the survey questionnaire was first revised in-house and then sent to select experts, stakeholders, and donors for review and suggestions. In a significant enhancement to fieldwork this year, additional quality control measures were built in to improve on the accuracy of the data collection: interview back-check teams supplemented the standard back checks conducted by ACSOR field-team supervisors.

Acknowledging the intense focus on sub-national governance and the upcoming 2009 Afghan elections, relevant questions in these subject areas were added to the basic questionnaire. Some standard questions were rephrased wherever it was felt that clearer and more useful responses could be obtained. Some design changes were also made to the sampling to increase the spread of the interviews to a larger area and avoid cases of homogeneity in responses due to closely clustered samples.

This year, there are 187 fewer respondents in the 2009 poll compared to the 2008 poll. The reduced sample size is due to the interviews that could not be conducted with female respondents in three provinces: Zabul, Uruzghan, and Paktika. Security concerns among eligible women made it difficult to recruit female interviewers in these provinces. Further, some interviews were taken out of the count due to concerns with quality after the quality control checks were conducted.

Q8. Why were questions about the 2009 presidential election added this year?

In addition to baseline questions included in the questionnaire since the survey's initial inception, topical questions about specific, timely issues are included each year. The survey is both a look at Afghan perceptions at a specific point in time and a tool to measure shifts in public opinion over a longer period of time.



The Asia Foundation

Q9. Does this poll measure whether Afghans have become disillusioned since the outcome of the August elections?

No, the poll was conducted during the same timeframe as previous polls, from June 17 – July 6, 2009, and captures the opinions of Afghans ahead of the Presidential and Provincial Council elections scheduled for August 2009. Two months before the elections 82 percent of respondents were aware of the elections and 77 percent had registered to vote. Seventy-three percent of registered voters said they were likely to vote including 48 percent who said this was very likely.

Q10. Will there be more surveys?

Yes. Similar surveys are planned for 2010 and 2011.

Q11. What does The Asia Foundation think of the survey?

As with our past survey reports, The Asia Foundation's role is not one of interpretation. Our role is to provide robust, useful, unique data that can illuminate the situation on the ground and provide context for policy relevant work. The survey report is an important piece of work completed during a difficult time in Afghanistan, but The Asia Foundation does not take a position on the findings.

We are pleased that by conducting these surveys repeatedly over several years we have built capacity in Afghanistan for Afghans to conduct such surveys, and we look forward to working closely with ACSOR, Kabul University, and others in the coming months to continue our work.

Q12. Why does The Asia Foundation conduct this survey?

The aim is to gather first-hand opinion of a large sample of Afghan citizens on a variety of contemporary governance and development-related issues so that policy makers and opinion shapers in government, the international community, and the broader Afghan public can utilize valid and reliable data as they make decisions and craft future policy.